

THE **NONCONFORMIST** **MUSICAL JOURNAL**

A MONTHLY RECORD AND REVIEW

DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF WORSHIP MUSIC IN THE NONCONFORMIST CHURCHES.

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SINGING IN SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

Arrangements have been made by the Committee of the Sunday School Union for a Course of LECTURES with DEMONSTRATIONS, to be given by Mr. W. G. MCNAUGHT (Associate R.A.M., Assistant Inspector of Music, Education Department), in the LECTURE HALL, 55, OLD BAILEY, E.C., on Thursday Evenings from Jan. 23rd to April 17th, 1890, at half-past Seven o'clock. The Course is designed to present the principles and considerations that should influence the use and practice of Music in Sunday Schools. Conductors of Sunday School Singing, Teachers desirous of qualifying themselves to teach Singing, and all interested in this important branch of Sunday School work are invited to attend. Admission Free to the OPENING LECTURE on Thursday Evening, Jan. 23rd, when SIR JOHN STAINER, M.A., Mus. Doc., has kindly consented to preside. MR. J. S. CURWEN, DR. E. H. TURPIN, Hon. Sec. the College of Organists, MR. EMIL BEHNKE (Author of the "Child's Voice," etc.), and other well-known Musicians will preside at the following Meetings. Fee for the Course, Officers or Teachers of connected schools, 3s. 6d. each; of unconnected schools, 6s. each. Syllabus can be obtained in the Secretaries' Office, 55, Old Bailey.

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EDITED BY E. MINSHALL,

*Organist and Director of the Music at the City Temple,
London, E.C.*

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Choral Conductors' Alliance.

MUSICAL critics and others are well aware that the huge choirs which appear annually on the Handel Orchestra at the Crystal Palace, and other places, are not composed entirely of really efficient singers. A large majority of the vocalists may be thoroughly competent, but there are undoubtedly also present a large number of inefficients, whose vocal efforts positively mar the singing. If they were "dummies" they would at least do no harm, if they did no good beyond helping to make a greater show. But the fact is—and none will more readily admit it than the conductors of these concerts—a greater artistic success would be achieved if the choirs underwent a very considerable weeding. Unfortunately, to make these fête days a pecuniary success (which in most cases is the object aimed at) it is necessary to advertise so many thousand singers; hence the importation of these "duffers" to make up numbers and fill up the vast space.

In these days of very general musical education, it is thought by many that some definite steps should be taken to raise the standard of membership to these large festival choirs. Mr. W. H. Bonner, G.T.S.C., L.T.S.C., the esteemed secretary of the Association of Tonic Sol-fa Choirs, who has taken great interest in the matter, convened a meeting to consider the whole question, on Saturday November 30th. Representatives from most of

the following organizations, viz.—Association of Tonic Sol-fa Choirs, Church of England Sunday School Choir, Church of England Temperance Society, Independent Order of Good Templars, London Sunday School Choir, National Temperance Choral Union, National Temperance League, Nonconformist Choir Union, North-East London Institute, South London Institute of Music, Stratford Musical Festival, Tonic Sol-fa College, Trinity College, United Kingdom Band of Hope Union—attended, and took part in the discussion.

Mr. W. G. McNaught, who has had great experience in choir-training and conducting large festivals, was appointed chairman, and his business ability and large knowledge of the subject under discussion, helped very much towards the success of the meeting.

It seemed to be the opinion of all present that no test should be applied to persons already connected with the various choirs, but with the view of admitting only those who are in every respect qualified, it is desirable that some kind of examination should be passed by all new applicants for membership. It was, however, felt by all that it would be impossible to make this test imperative, for a time at least, as so many are apparently afraid of anything like a general examination.

The question then arose as to who should conduct these examinations and issue the certificates. Some thought that an existing institution, such as the Tonic Sol-fa College or Trinity College, should be requested to undertake the work. It was, however, ultimately proposed that a Choral Conductors' Alliance be formed to carry out the idea. This was agreed to, and those present at the meeting were appointed the Executive Committee of the Alliance.

There was not much discussion as to the tests to be imposed. The chairman's experience in such matters was invaluable, and on his suggestion it was unanimously agreed that quality of voice, power of imitation, theory (time signatures, key signatures, etc.), and an ear test (not too difficult) should form the basis of examination. The details of this examination are to be settled by a small sub-committee composed of representatives from the various organizations, and their recommendations will be submitted to the general committee at a meeting to be held early this month.

We fear many of our Nonconformist Church Choirs contain incompetent singers. In many instances this cannot be helped, unfortunately, as the candidates for membership are so few that it is a case of "Hobson's choice." In most choirs, however, some examination as to qualification is imposed; and as the test to be agreed upon by the Choral Conductors' Alliance will go forth with the strong recommendation of that very representative body, choirmasters will find it very helpful in securing competent singers. Many who might object to be examined unofficially, would willingly undergo the ordeal to get a certificate from the Conductors' Alliance. We hope the present members of our choirs will resolve to take this certificate.

Many matters of detail have yet to be arranged, but we have no doubt the outcome of the movement will be very beneficial. Speedy results to any large extent cannot be expected, but if choir-masters will make themselves acquainted with the particulars of the scheme, they can, if they like, do much towards making it a success, and that at an early period.

WE very heartily congratulate Dr. E. H. Turpin upon the honour recently conferred upon him by the Archbishop of Canterbury. Few men in the musical world so richly deserve this recognition. Dr. Turpin is greatly esteemed, not only as an able musician, but as a genial, courteous, and thoroughly upright gentleman.

WE are indebted to the *London Figaro* for the following delightful story:—A good old homespun lady had attended for some time a church in which the service was intoned. Meeting the vicar in the street one day, she said to him: "Mr. Pasture, I have a little favour to ask of ye; I've bin a-sayin' my prayers in F now for nigh on to five years, and I would reelly like to say them in E for a while. I'm getting so tuskny in F now that I can't jine in as I used to do."

WE are glad to hear that the Nonconformist choirs in Coventry have formed themselves into a local choir union.

WE would call our readers' attention to the Prize Anthem competition, full particulars of which will be found in another column.

THE Glasgow Presbytery of the Established Church of Scotland has been considerably troubled in connection with the extra music given in some of the churches on Sunday evenings. A resolution was proposed denouncing the movement as a desecration of the Sabbath. One gentleman enjoyed the music so long as everyone joined in it, but when a solo was sung he felt he was "back to the world at once." The mover of the resolution, in attempting to reply to the argument that outsiders, who did not go to church at all, were attracted there by music, said:—"Seeing it was an attempt to get the people to come to church, he could give them a recipe that would cram them to the doors. They were told in a certain psalm to praise God with the organ and the dance. They had only to announce a firstclass ballet on the platform of the church; that the prettiest girls in the congregation would be there showing themselves off in tights, or whatever they liked." Such an indecent and disgraceful speech very properly brought the Moderator to his feet, who peremptorily ordered the speaker to sit down. Upon a vote being taken it was resolved, by twenty-eight to five, to take no action in the matter; so the Sunday music is to continue.

So great has been the demand for the little pamphlet on "The Duties and Responsibilities of

a Choir," by the Editor, that a second edition became necessary, and is now ready.

THE bound volume of the Journal for 1889 may now be had at our Office, price 3s. 6d. Cases for binding may also be had, price 1s.

THE Nonconformist Choir Union Executive have made arrangements for a Soirée to be held in the library at the Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, on Monday, January 20th. All Nonconformist organists choirmasters and choir members (whether connected with the Union or not) are cordially invited. Several well-known musical men have accepted the invitation of the Committee to attend and say a few words. Refreshments from 6.30. There will be music at intervals during the evening. The following vocalists amongst others have kindly consented to sing:—Madame Riechelmann, Miss Edith Luke, Miss Rose Dafforne, Mr. Dyved Lewis, and Mr. Alexander Tucker. Madame Jessie Morison will play a pianoforte solo. We anticipate a very pleasant evening, so we hope there will be a large attendance. Tickets, 1s. 6d. each, may be had from Mr. T. R. Croger, 114, Wood Street, E.C., or from our Office.

THE North-West Kent Baptist Association sets an admirable example to the county unions of the various denominations by having an annual conference on Psalmody. Most of the unions are well contented if the subject of Church Music is brought before them once in a decade, though many far less important topics are discussed with monotonous frequency.

MR. ANDREW YOUNG, author of probably the most popular hymn for children,—

"There is a happy land,
Far, far away,"

died in Edinburgh on Saturday, November 30th, aged 80 years.

THE *Northern Advance* is responsible for the following:—"A minister went not long since to supply the pulpit of a chapel in W—tf—d, and on meeting the venerable deacon in the vestry before the service, asked how many hymns would be sung. 'How many?' responded the frowning deacon. 'Yes, some chapels in which I preach have four.' 'Four!' rejoined the deacon, growing indignant; 'do you preach in places in which they sing four?' 'Yes,' answered the minister. 'Then you won't preach here. You belong to the new theology. We can dispense with your services, sir. Here's your guinea, and you can go.' Exit minister with the guinea, saying, 'I should like to meet twenty such blessed deacons to-day.'"

THE Nonconformist Choir Union Festival at the Crystal Palace will take place either the last Saturday in May or the first in June, probably the latter. The programme is not finally settled, but the following pieces are suggested, and will

almost certainly be selected, viz.:—"As the hart pants" (Mendelssohn); "Round about the Starry Throne" (Handel); "Sleepers, awake!" (Mendelssohn); "O clap your hands!" (Stainer); "The Glory of the Lord" (Goss); "The Lord is my Shepherd" (Macfarren); "Blessed are the Merciful" (Vicars); "The Son of God goes forth to war" (Sullivan's arrangement of *St. Ann's*); "The Potter" (Gaul); "Love and Summer" (J. E. West); "Song for Spring" (Silas); "Now by day's retiring lamp" (Bishop). It is hoped the Book of Music will be ready for distribution by the end of this month. Choirs wishing to join the Union should at once make an application to the Hon. Sec., Mr. T. R. Croger, 114, Wood Street, E.C. There are no fees; but singers have to pay for the Book of Music, which costs about one shilling. Return railway tickets from London including admission to the Palace will, we believe, be given free to every singer as last year. Country choirs must defray their own expenses up to London, but the various railway companies act liberally in that matter. We hope all those choirs who took part in last year's Festival will attend again and get some of their neighbouring choirs to join them. Are there no friends enthusiastic enough to try and get contingents from Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, etc.? Many other smaller towns—especially those near London, such as Oxford, Reading, Chelmsford, Cambridge, Brighton, etc.,—certainly ought to be represented. We anticipate many more Metropolitan choirs will join the Union in this year's Festival. Full particulars can be obtained from the Hon. Sec.

Liturgical Worship.

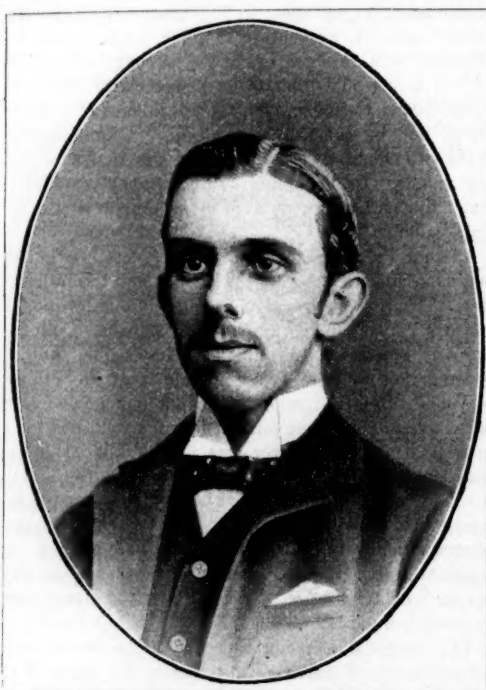
DURING the last thirty years great changes—and, for the most part, changes for the better—have been brought about in the service of praise in Nonconformist congregations. But in respect to public prayer, a conservative tradition holds the field. With the exception of the introduction, in some churches, of a short invocation at the commencement of Divine worship, and the repetition of the Lord's Prayer at some point in the service, we "stand in the old ways." It is now thirty-three years since the late Thomas Binney spoke of the "signs of the times" as indicating "dissatisfaction with the state of worship prevalent amongst us," and as showing "a yearning for something deeper and richer than what we have; something, too, in which the people shall take a prominent and active part—not in psalmody only, but in supplication—in which they shall be called vocally to utter some portions of the Church's *common prayer*, so that, by audible repetition and appropriate response, and other modes of united action, they shall feel that they positively *do* pray, as well as listen to their praying." There is every reason to believe that a majority of the Congregational and Baptist ministers, at any rate, would have expressed themselves in favour of the adoption of a brief liturgical service in their churches if the question had been submitted to them at any time during the last quarter of a century. And yet, with a few exceptions all have

been content to jog along in the time-worn ruts. No earnest minister, we venture to think, would desire to dispense with free prayer, and few congregations of faithful men would tolerate its displacement. But as a *supplement* to free prayer, the advantages of a short liturgy will be generally recognized. A combination of the two would, it is believed, be productive of the best results. Dr. Cumming affirmed, many years ago, that "the partial use of a form of prayer would be truly valuable."

Another Presbyterian writer declares his conviction that "too much is done *for* the people, and too little *by* them. There is an excess of *listening* in our devotional services." Dr. Green, formerly of Rawdon College, similarly suggests: "Would it be impossible for the congregation to take some audible part in public prayer?" It is not improbable that one good effect of the adoption of some form of liturgy would be found to be that the free prayer was itself rendered more truly spontaneous—the minister being set free from the duty and effort of remembering those petitions which it is usually felt *ought* to be presented in the congregation every Lord's Day. But the great gain of a partial liturgy would be that the exercises of united prayer would be made more truly real and devotional to every worshipper.

The essential element, however, to be insisted on in any form of service, in order to its being thus spiritually helpful, is its *responsive* character. A form of prayer simply read by the minister would be but little, if any, improvement upon an extempore prayer delivered by him. It is the participation, actually and by audible utterance, of the people which would, it is claimed, tend to foster a spirit of intelligent devotion. The *Litany* of the Book of Common Prayer is the model upon which such a responsive service might be arranged. And in addition to a series of petitions, to which congregations might respond in some such phrases as "Good Lord, deliver us," and "We beseech Thee to hear us, O Lord," the Commandments might be recited, followed by the familiar suffrage: "Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law;" and the Beatitudes with some suitable ejaculation by the worshipping congregation.

Possibly the difficulty which more than any other has blocked all possible effort towards an improvement of our public worship in this direction, has been the harsh uncouthness of what has inevitably been a mere hurried gabble of the solemn words. There is but one way of avoiding this, the employment of music to secure rhythmical and harmonious recitation. But even to hint at such a thing as singing a prayer has hitherto been sure to excite the intensest antipathy and the most vehement opposition of our orthodox Protestants. Does this prejudice against wedding music to words of supplication still survive? It is not easy to say until the experiment has been made under favourable circumstances and with sufficient generality. But by what subtle argument the use of music in connection with hymns of prayer, as well as of praise, can be justified by those who recoil from the thought of singing or chanting, or even intoning a suffrage, it is by no means easy to conjecture.—*The Northern Advance*.



Music at the Quadrant Congregational Church, Highbury.

A VERY few years ago the locality known as Highbury Vale, was nothing but green fields; but so rapidly have the builders transformed the scene, that now there is little room for more houses, and the district is inhabited by a vast population. To meet the religious needs of the neighbourhood, the Congregationalists erected an iron building in the Quadrant, but this was soon replaced by the large (we wish we could also say handsome) building that is so conspicuous an object.

The first minister of this church was Dr. Bevan, who about two years ago went to Australia. He was succeeded by the present pastor, the Rev. Samuel Pearson, M.A. (who came from Great George Street Chapel, Liverpool); and under his care the church is doing good work in the district.

On the occasion of our visit we found a good congregation, but the church was certainly not crowded, although it happened to be the monthly popular service for the people. These services are held on a Sunday evening once a month, when more music is given than usual, and the sermon is specially adapted to the congregation.

A few minutes before seven o'clock Mr. A. T. George, the able organist and choirmaster (whose likeness we give above) took his seat at the organ, a fine-looking and sweet-toned instrument of some thirty-odd stops. The case extends from side to side of the recess at the back of the pulpit, and being elegant in design, strikes the eye at once as a distinct feature in the building. At the commencement of the opening voluntary—a very

tasteful and appropriate composition, extempore if we mistake not—the choir filed out of their vestry into their places in the gallery, in front and at the sides of the organ; and at the same time Mr. Pearson appeared in the pulpit. The choir consisted of sixteen women, twelve men, and fourteen boys—the latter all dressed alike in short black coats with white collars. On the left-hand side of the organ were the basses and some of the ladies; on the right-hand side the tenors and the rest of the ladies; while the boys sat in a single row in front of the organ. Though the choir are admirably placed for leading the congregation, they are unfortunately cut into two divisions by the organ, the only connecting link being the row of boys. Thus the basses cannot hear the tenors and *vice versa*. Considering this however, they kept well together, for at no point in the service could we detect any variation of time between the parts.

Before the commencement of the service proper, two pieces were sung, the congregation remaining seated. The first was a bright Christmas carol with a solo (sung by all the trebles) and chorus. The second was Barnby's well-known and beautiful setting of "Abide with me." Probably this was comparatively new to the choir, for it did not go well. In our opinion it was much too fast, especially the solo parts. To give this really charming composition full effect, the single voice parts should be sung as solos, and not by all the voices of the respective parts, otherwise sufficient light and shade and appropriate change of time cannot be given. The tenor part was (we presume) so weak that they had to be assisted by the boys! The chorus at the end was good, except that the last few bars, which are marked "Adagio," were not slow enough.

The service proper commenced with the hymn "O give thanks to Him who made!" which was sung to Sullivan's tune, *Mount Zion*; but evidently the tune was unknown, for very few of the congregation were able to join in. It was, therefore, a rather depressing beginning to the service. If these special services for the people are to attract outsiders, the music should be as bright as possible, and the tunes should certainly be well-known, so that all can take part. A new tune upon such an occasion is a great mistake. Where a book compiled upon the "fixed tune" system is adopted (as is the case at this church) the minister should be particular to select only hymns that have popular tunes set to them. There need be no difficulty on this point, for in the "Congregational Church Hymnal" (the book in use at the Quadrant) there are a large number of familiar hymns set to well-known tunes.

After a short Scripture Lesson we had a chant, viz. Psalm xxiv. to Barnby in E. We can commend Mr. George and his choir upon the time at which it was taken, and also for the steadiness with which it went. The enunciation was hardly clear enough; and some of the commas were not observed, especially in verses 4 and 5, "Lift up your heads,"

etc. Upon the whole however, it was very fair congregational chanting.

The anthem was "All ye nations, praise the Lord" (W. F. Müller), and this was very heartily sung by the choir and many of the regular congregation. There was no dragging, and the marks of expression were carefully attended to. The hymn before the sermon was the ever popular "Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah!" and in giving it out Mr. Pearson said, "Let us all heartily sing this hymn;" but, alas! another unknown tune put a damper upon the vocal powers of the great majority of the congregation, and the singing fell flat.

Mr. Pearson delivered a popular and practical sermon upon "The Temptations of London" to which the people listened most attentively.

The closing hymn was "Jesu, Lover of my soul," which was of course sung to *Hollingside*, and this gave the people a chance they had been longing for. They sang heartily, and from beginning to end the hymn went with vigour. The expression marks, especially the "p's," were disregarded; but as the bulk of the congregation had been mute so far, they could not let this, their last opportunity, go without having "a good sing." Before the last verse Mr. George played a short interlude. The Benediction and a soft voluntary brought the service to a close.

They have all the elements necessary for good congregational singing at the Quadrant, and when the music in the "Hymnal," recently introduced, becomes better known, no doubt the psalmody will be improved. New music must of course be sung sometimes; but we are strongly of opinion that if these special services for the people are to be attractive to outsiders, only perfectly well-known tunes should be used on those occasions.

Mr. George works hard to get the music as good as possible. On Fridays he first has the boys alone for an hour or so; then he has the whole choir, and after that the Choral Society, which, though meeting in the Lecture Hall, is not strictly a church institution. With so much music going on we hope ere long to hear thoroughly satisfactory results.

"ELIJAH" AT WESTBOURNE PARK.

ON Monday, the 16th ult., the Westbourne Park Choral Association, in connection with Westbourne Park (Dr. Clifford's) Chapel, gave their first concert for this season, when Mendelssohn's "Elijah" was performed with marked success. The artists were Miss Selina Quick, Miss Pierpoint, Mr. Dyved Lewys (in the unavoidable absence of Mr. Maldwyn Humphreys), and Mr. Musgrove Tufnail. Miss Quick and Miss Pierpoint sang with much taste and expression in their several parts. Mr. Lewys was recalled for "If, with all your hearts," which he sang with great power. Mr. Tufnail was in splendid voice, and took with much dramatic feeling the part of the prophet; his rendering of "It is enough" being very fine, for which he was twice recalled. The choir sang with neatness and precision under the baton of Mr. Rowland Briant, a small orchestra (selected from the Albert Hall orchestra) adding greatly to the effect. We shall look forward with much pleasure to the next performance, which takes place on February 10th, 1890.

Conference on Worship Music.

THE North-West Kent Baptist Association held their Annual Conference on Psalmody at Plumstead, on the 3rd ult. There was a good attendance of ministers, delegates, and others.

At the request of the committee MR. E. MINSHALL opened the Conference by reading a paper on Worship Music, of which the following is an outline:—

The chief object of public services is the worship of the Almighty, and to that supreme purpose everything should tend. All their music should, therefore, be distinctly religious, not only in character, but in performance also. A sacred piece may be profanely sung, and do much harm to hearers, especially if they are not religiously inclined. The aim should, therefore, be at all times to produce religious impressions upon the hearts of the congregation, to turn their thoughts heavenward, and by the heartiness of the singing to cause a thrill of holy joy. There could be no doubt that the majority of the congregation like a good hearty musical service. Where there is such a service, the church is invariably crowded. Music is a great attraction. In the Established Church they always found a large congregation where there was a good organ and an efficient choir. He would not go so far as to say that where there was a poor musical service there was always an equally poor congregation. He ventured, however, to maintain that, with the exception of some half-dozen men he might name, there was no preacher, either Conformist or Nonconformist, who could draw a crowded congregation without the assistance of music. There were some peculiar people in the world, who held that it was not right for them to make music an attraction to draw people into church or chapel. They would confine it most strictly to three or four tunes only, for the purpose of united worship—that is to say, nothing must be sung in which all the people cannot audibly join. But if the church was half empty, and had come to what he might term a state of religious bankruptcy, surely, he said, it was right to endeavour to fill it by the assistance of a beautiful, not to say elaborate, musical service. The Salvation Army had found out the value of instrumental music as an attraction to their mission halls. A short time ago Captain Slater, the chief of the editorial staff in the Musical Publication Department, told him that he believed the drum was more powerful in attracting the attention of the people than any other instrument. Upon the first occasion that the drum was used at an indoor meeting of the Army there were more conversions and greater spiritual results generally than at any previous meeting. This was a remarkable fact. Whether a much-beaten drum would have the same effect upon the better-educated people is exceedingly doubtful; but upon the lower classes—amongst whom the members of the Salvation Army chiefly work—its power is evidently considerable. He might be asked what kind of music he would suggest to make a service bright and attractive, and also helpful to Christian life. To confine the musical part of a service to three hymns (which he feared was the case in many chapels) was, in his opinion, the way

to empty the places of worship and drive the congregation to the Established Church. People did not want all the worship done for them by the minister; they wanted to take a larger share audibly in the service. The anthem should not be one of those mamby-pamby syrupy things we occasionally hear, but a really good musical composition. It is possible to get good anthems written in a simple style. The anthem should be sung by the choir *alone*, the congregation taking part with the heart rather than with the lip; but, unfortunately, there were so many in the congregation with cracked voices (who generally sing half a tone flat) who consider everything a *performance* unless they are able, by their unmusical discord, to spoil the best efforts of those trained vocalists who give their time and energies to the musical work of the Church. He hoped that among the "many mansions" promised above, there would be one specially set apart in some rural spot for such unmelodious and fault-finding singers. He strongly advocated the desirability of solo-singing in the churches, and said: "How much greater the impression would be if the tender verses of a hymn were sung by the sweet, unaffected voice of a truly Christian girl rather than boisterously sung by the whole congregation! Many object on the ground that it is not worship for a hymn to be thus treated. They hear with satisfaction and profit a psalm *read* by the minister, but a paraphrase of the same psalm *sung* by one voice is, in their estimation, a device of the devil, leading to Rome, if not somewhere else." He pleaded for the music in the churches being more varied in character, and hence more effectual in reaching the hearts of all the people. It is most desirable in arranging a service that *all* classes of persons should be considered, and that the tunes sung should be such that all can join to their heart's content; but for the more refined and cultured ear the anthem should be introduced. If the musical service is to be properly and suitably rendered the music should be in harmony with the sermon. It is the minister's place to decide upon the theme; and that his ideas may be fully carried out it is desirable that every part of the service should tend in that direction; but if a minister is so neglectful as to send the hymns to the organist five minutes before the commencement of service, he must not be surprised to find the tunes quite unsuitable to the words, and, for want of previous practice, likewise badly sung. Nonconformist choirs are not lacking in ability, and, if an average be taken, they are as competent as the choirs in the Established Church; but in these days of musical education, when everyone has, at least, some knowledge of music, we must see to it that our musical services are fully up to the mark.

In the discussion which followed several took part. Some objection was raised to the use of the drum in a religious service. One speaker complained that organists introduced so many new and uncongregational tunes, but another gentleman replied that it was most monotonous to harp upon the same few tunes year after year. Several present objected to solo singing as being of the nature of a performance. One minister said he had

recently preached at a chapel where they had a most elaborate musical service, and though he did not pretend to be very musical himself, the singing had touched his heart very much. He was much struck by the very reverent way the congregation conducted themselves; there was no talking and no hurrying away directly the "Amen" was said. He was not quite prepared to admit that the good music had produced this satisfactory result, though evidently the speaker was inclined to think such was the case.

After Mr. MINSHALL had briefly replied to the various points, the meeting broke up.

In the evening a public meeting was held, at which Mr. JOHN S. CURWEN gave an interesting epitome of the history of congregational singing, and said that, from its introduction into the regular service, by the Rev. Benjamin Keach, until its final adoption by the Baptists at Maze Pond in 1715, the difficulties created were almost innumerable, and the absurd prejudices were very highly amusing. He thought that the art of singing ought to form a part of the curriculum of every student for the ministry. Reading the Church papers as he did, he noticed that there was a strong feeling growing up within the Church that they had gone far enough in the "Sunday Concert" direction, and that a reaction in favour of congregational singing was setting in. There was no doubt that our own voices were the most natural and effective expression of our own emotions. When the Queen rode through London on Jubilee Day, the people did not appoint select companies here and there to cheer her, they cheered her themselves. And the analogy in regard to worship held good. At the same time he thought that where the choir was competent, good might be done by letting them sing once in the service while the congregation devoutly listened. Provided that the rest of the music was congregational, he heartily welcomed this feature, and would go further and recognize an order of "singing preachers"—men and women with skill in song, and under the influence of devout feeling, who might utter the words of Scripture in the immortal setting of the great masters of music. In public worship we want to be impressed as well as to express ourselves, and the anthem or solo would impress us, often as deeply as the sermon. The best way to get congregational singing was to confine ourselves to tunes that the people knew and liked. The fixed-tune system, whatever its ultimate effect, was at present in many places baffling and silencing the people by breaking up old associations and compelling the performance of uninteresting tunes. Organs, he thought, were much better played now than they were a few years ago, the tone being more subdued to the voices. He pleaded, especially in the opening voluntary, for a use of the calm pervading tone of the diapasons, instead of warbling on solo stops. Sunday School singing, he considered, was in a bad way, wanting often in devotional feeling, and being frequently coarse and careless. If the Sunday School could be brought into closer touch with the church the musical influence would probably be good. He concluded an able address by saying that "Devotion is the aim, devotion is the end, but music is the means;"

and pointed out that the end of worship must not be lost sight of by paying too much attention to the means.

A choir, under the able leadership of Mr. J. Dugdale, sang several anthems very creditably during the meeting.

Nonconformist Choir Union Festival, at Christ Church, Westminster Bridge Road.

It is very probable that, to the pressure of business engagements in view of the approaching festive season, we may trace the comparatively small attendance at the above Festival on Tuesday, the 3rd ult., both as regards choir and congregation. In other respects (including, may we hope the financial result) the Festival was a success, as it deserved to be, from the evident care with which the choirs taking part therein had been trained. The singers occupied a large portion of the middle of the spacious church, and were arranged in two complete choirs, Decani on the right, Cantoris on the left, of the central aisle; and were conducted by Mr. F. G. Edwards from the steps leading up to the Communion Table. The introductory voluntary was played by Mr. Hawkins (late of Finsbury Park); and the opening hymn, sung by choir and congregation, was the well-known "Now thank we all our God," the unison passages coming out with good effect against free harmonies played on the organ by Mr. Griffiths, who accompanied the choral music throughout with skill and taste, keeping the fine instrument well under control, and supporting the voices without at all overpowering them. The Lord's Prayer having been said, Psalm cxlvii. was chanted to Wesley in E♭. The enunciation of the words was clear and distinct without being too slow, and light and shade were carefully noted. The Old Testament Lesson narrated the grand outburst of song at the dedication of Solomon's Temple, and the Second Lesson was St. Luke's account of the Transfiguration of our Lord. Before the Lessons Dr. Garrett's anthem in E♭, "The Lord is loving unto every man," was finely sung, and formed, as we think, the best choral number in the service. Dr. Dykes' well-known *Te Deum* in F, came between the Lessons, and the beautiful anthem, now becoming well-known and deservedly popular, "The radiant morn," by the Rev. H. H. Woodward, M.A., was sung after the Second Lesson. This anthem was somewhat unevenly rendered, an acceleration of the *tempo* near the middle (not marked in the music) causing a little unsteadiness. Before the sermon, Cowper's tender hymn, "Hark! my soul, it is the Lord,"—to the sympathetic *St. Bees*—was sung by the congregation and the choir, with the exception of the verse beginning "Mine is an unchanging love," which the choir alone sang. The Rev. Newman Hall (who was assisted in the devotional parts of the service by the Rev. H. Grainger, the Rev. J. Hunt Cooke, the Rev. W. Beville Allen, and other ministers) preached a very appropriate sermon, a brief *résumé* of which appears lower down. During the offertory Mr. E. Blandford played Salomé's Cantilène in A minor, and then all heartily joined in the hymn "Praise, my soul, the King of Heaven," to H. Smart's well-known

tune, *Regent Square*. This was followed by the Benediction, to which Stainer's "Amen" formed a reverent conclusion. The voluntary after the service was played by Mr. A. Briscoe.

Following—at a distance, doubtless—the example of one of our foremost musical critics, we prefer to treat this Festival not as on the lines of a concert, but rather as a religious service. Still, absent friends always ask "How did such and such a piece go?" Well, in short, the singing was good—the pitch very rarely, indeed if at all, at fault. As to relative strength, the sopranos had the mastery, the tenors coming next, and the altos fourth, something of the comparative effect probably being due to the acoustical peculiarities of the edifice. Shall we be going too far in suggesting whether, at least in the hymns, conducting might be dispensed with? Congregations generally have to do without the aid—and an aid it is—of the baton: all the more easy one would imagine, therefore, for trained singers to keep well together in music of a simple character, provided only that the organist plays with intelligent and "clean" execution; and that he "gives out" the tunes as nearly as possible at the rate at which the hymns are to be sung. This must not be on any account taken as a reflection on Mr. Edwards or his conducting, as, under the circumstances he could not but be very much indeed "the observed of all observers."

The stimulating and educational effect of such gatherings must be considerable, and more than justify and repay the care and hard work expended by those on whom the responsibility of these choral festivals falls, and the attention and loyalty of the "rank and file."

The following very imperfect outline of the Rev. Newman Hall's suggestive address will interest our readers—

The words, "Sing together," from Isaiah lii., formed a suitable text for such an occasion. The Christian Church should be characterized, not by gloom, but by joyfulness. He—the preacher—felt it to be a great privilege to address such a gathering of fellow-ministers of God's Church, for such in reality were those who reverently and heartily led the praises of the people—the choir was a sharer of the ministry. He regarded the use of the surplice not as ritualistic, but as anti-ritualistic. For the singers were laymen—claimed to have had no priestly ordination—yet by their adoption of the surplice their fellowship in the ministry, and their solemn dedication thereto, were indicated. He would wish to take it for granted that choristers were themselves Christians—think of the inconsistency of trying to lead others in the worship of Him whom we are not ourselves obeying. Then be as *punctual* as the pastors. "Of course *you* never talk—*you* will not be found handing about papers, and discussing tunes, and paying no attention to the other parts of the service, or singing merely for the sake of display." Remember that singers are, with pastors, *ministers*, serving, not themselves, but the Church.

After eloquent reference to the Divine source and intention of music, Mr. Hall criticized the conduct of ladies and gentlemen with cultivated voices who used their talents almost exclusively for purposes of social enjoyment, and also referred to the progress which

music in connection with public worship had made during the period of his ministry. He could well remember persons leaving the Church when chanting was introduced. It was thought quite proper, for instance, to sing "The Lord my Shepherd is, I shall be well supplied," but wrong to sing the grand old Bible words "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want." Then reference was made to the function of music in the heavenly world, and to the multitude joining in the song "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain." Sing, then *heartily*, no mumbling; *intelligently* and intelligibly. Persons who could not at the same time produce good tone and clear words were not yet cultured singers; *expressively*, every word having its due attention; *devotionally*, if he were a good singer he should like a good hearty clap at the end of his song; but this sort of thing was entirely out of place in Christian worship, the desire for applause and the mere wish to display a fine voice should find no place there. Then "sing *together*." This meant taking pains; attendance at practice; keeping in touch with the people. The perfection of congregational singing was when the choir became lost in the common worship-song; not that the choir should not sing by themselves. Just as a minister led in prayer, in which the people silently joined, and by means of which they came near to God, so the choir might by reverent singing of suitable words lift up the hearts of those who could not perhaps join audibly to edification in the song.

And it was well that they could "sing together" with all sections of the Christian Church. Shut out of each other's pulpits, they were still able to unite with Christians of every sect in the service of praise. And so learning on earth to sing, and to sing together, let them be looking forward to sharing in the grand chorus in the heavenly world: "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

G.

Why Organs are Discordant.

A WELL-KNOWN organist says that he is sometimes blamed for using bad combinations when the fault lies wholly in the atmosphere. Organ pipes are affected by cold and heat, and this organist says that he has known the pitch of a certain stop to alter three-fourths of a tone in a few hours. "Often," he says, "on Saturday night, or early on Sunday morning, when I rehearse, I find the instrument in perfect tune, but as soon as the furnaces are stoked up, and a big audience assembles, the thermometer rises, and the pitch of some of my pipes rises with it. Commonly the organ-builder allows for this, and, as the reeds seldom change, he pitches them a trifle high in order to allow for atmospheric sharpening of the other stops; but how if the temperature is low, and the other stops don't change? Then, you see, you've got a discord, and you have to shut off the reeds altogether. Dampness and other changes affect organs too, and it is distressing when you are playing smoothly to have one of the notes 'cipher.' It brings you up with a round turn, and you have to stop and disengage the obstinate key. Organ-playing is not all play. I've seen a conductor while directing a performance writhe when the organ struck in, and signal to the organist to stop playing, for the heat created by the audience and the gaslight had thrown some of the pipes entirely off, and the result was a horrible discord."

Nonconformist Church Organs.

ST. JOHN'S WOOD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,
LONDON, N.W.

THE organ is by Messrs. Lewis & Co., Limited, of Brixton. It originally consisted of Two Manuals and a Pedal, with 18 sounding Stops and 4 Couplers; and was opened in 1878.

The Solo key-board (added in 1888), and its draw-stops are acted upon by the improved *Electric-pneumatic* action, the distance from the keys to the pipes being thirty feet. By the application of this mechanism, the sound-boards on which the pipes stand, can be placed in any position, and the touch and repetition of the keys are perfect and instantaneous, whatever the distance from the pipes.

Great Organ, Eight Stops.

(Lowest Keyboard.)

	Feet.	Pipes.
1. Bourdon	16	56
2. Open Diapason (large scale)	8	56
3. Rohr Gedact	8	56
4. Salicional (Tenor C, grooved)	8	44
5. Octave	4	56
6. Rohr Flöte	4	56
7. Mixture (15, 19, 22)	—	168
8. Trumpet	8	56

Swell Organ, Eight Stops.

(Middle Keyboard.)

9. Geigen Principal (Tenor C, grooved)	8	44
10. Lieblich Gedact	8	56
11. Viol de Gambe	8	56
12. Voix Célestes (Tenor C)	8	44
13. Geigen Principal	4	56
14. Bassoon	16	56
15. Horn	8	56
16. Oboe	8	56

Solo Organ, Five Stops.

(Highest Keyboard.)

*17. Open Diapason (small scale)	8	56
*18. Flute Harmonique	8	56
*19. Flute Harmonique	4	56
*20. Piccolo Harmonique	2	56
*21. Clarinet	8	56

N.B.—The draw-stops of this manual are arranged *above the Keys*.

Pedal Organ, Two Stops.

22. Open-Bass	16	30
23. Sub-Bass	16	30

Couplers.

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Swell to Great. | *5. Solo to Swell. |
| 2. Swell to Pedals. | *6. Swell Super-octave |
| 3. Great to Pedals. | (acting by a pedal). |
| *4. Solo to Pedals. | |

Three Composition Pedals to the Great, and *Two to the Swell.

*Great to Pedal Coupler acting by a Pedal.

Summary.

	Stops.	Pipes.
Great	8	548
Swell	8	424
Solo	5	280
Pedal	2	60
Couplers	6	—
Total 29		Total 1,312

* These were added in 1888.

Prize Anthem Competition.

WE propose to offer a prize of Three Guineas for the best original Festival Anthem. The following are the conditions:

1. Compositions must be sent in to our office not later than February 10th, 1890.
2. Each composition must be marked with a *nom de plume*, and must be accompanied by a sealed envelope containing the name and address of the composer.
3. The anthem must be of a festival character, and may contain solos.
4. The composition to be not less than eighty bars, and must be written in vocal parts with organ accompaniment.
5. The successful anthem shall become our copy-right on payment of the prize.
6. Unsuccessful compositions will be returned if stamped addressed envelopes are sent us for that purpose.
7. We reserve the right to withhold the prize should we consider there is no composition of sufficient merit.
8. Our decision in all matters relating to the competition shall be final.

REGENT'S PARK SACRED HARMONIC SOCIETY.

A MOST interesting concert was given in Regent's Park Chapel on Wednesday, the 11th ult., when a professional orchestra of some forty-five performers, led by Mr. R. Starr, and conducted by Mr. J. L. Phillips and a choir of two hundred voices, with Mr. F. G. Edwards at the organ, performed the following excellent programme:—First part: *Overture*, "St. John the Baptist" (Macfarren); *Serenade*, No. 1, in D minor, op. 22, for strings (Goetze); *Motet*, "Hear my prayer" (Mendelssohn); *Solo*, Miss Fusselle; *Benedictus* (A. C. Mackenzie); *Crusaders' March and Chorus*, "St. Elizabeth" (Liszt). Mendelssohn's "Hymn of Praise" occupied the second portion of the programme, the soloists being Miss Fusselle, Miss Jessie Dixon, and Mr. Charles Chilley. Ambitious as the above looks in print, it proved to be fully justified, as under the able direction of Mr. J. L. Phillips the whole passed off in an eminently satisfactory manner. The *serenade* by Goetze was very favourably received by a by no means enthusiastic audience. The ever beautiful "Hear my prayer" was sung to perfection by Miss Fusselle and the choir, while the orchestral accompaniments did not drown the voices as it so often does on such occasions. The *Benedictus* was very carefully played, with good effect, but the *Crusaders' March* must have been given in honour of the illustrious composer rather than in the cause of art; it is very "taking," but is not likely to be often heard. The "Hymn of Praise" went smoothly from beginning to end; but it seems a pity that "The Shadow of Death" commences on such a difficult note to get, and Mr. Chilley is only human, so we must forgive the slip; also the one made in the duet, "My song shall be always." The choruses were very good, the difficult fugues going without fault. Taking it all in all, the managers have to record a good artistic success, but why it was not better supported we do not know. The building could comfortably have seated at least five times the number of those present. We wish them better fortune on the next occasion.

"ELIJAH" AT NEW COURT CHAPEL.

NEW COURT CONGREGATIONAL CHAPEL, Tollington Park, was densely packed on the evening of the 3rd ult., the aisles, passages, and even the windows being occupied by an eager throng, till there was not even standing room, and many late comers were unable to get in at all. The occasion was the performance of Mendelssohn's "Elijah" by the New Court Choral Society, the soloists being Misses Annie Marriott and Helen Ornarey, Madame Patey, Messrs. Henry Guy and Egbert Roberts, with a chorus of upwards of one hundred voices. The orchestra was built up right across the building, from gallery to gallery, and looked at from the body of the church, presented a noble appearance, all being well within view of the conductor, Mr. Thomas Bound.

Needless to say that Madame Patey evoked enthusiastic applause for her delightful rendering of "O, rest in the Lord!" the exquisite pathos infused into the singing of the beautiful words completely carried away the audience, many of whom were greatly moved. The other soloists admirably performed the parts allotted them, and the choruses were, with but one or two exceptions, given with true expression, the entries and endings being marked by promptness and finish. So much for the musical performance—a genuine treat from beginning to end. But *verbum sap.*, we would suggest that at any future concert better arrangements be made for the accommodation of the audience; it seems hardly fair that ticket-holders should stand crowded in the aisles, not only incommoded themselves, but completely cutting off all view from the side seats. Evidently so great a crush was not anticipated.

Echoes from the Churches.

(Paragraphs for this column should reach us by the 20th of the month.)

METROPOLITAN.

BISHOPSGATE.—The City Temple Choir gave a concert in the Congregational Church, on the 9th ult. There was a large and appreciative audience.

CAMDEN TOWN.—On Tuesday, the 10th ult., Mr. C. Darnton's new cantata, "The Song of Creation," was given in Park Chapel, under the direction of the composer. The soloists were Miss Adeline Davies, Miss Edith Higgs, Mr. George Micklewood, and Mr. Bridson. Miss Emily Dixon was the harpist, and Mr. E. Drewett was a very efficient accompanist, and also played an organ solo. The choir sang well, though a little more attention to light and shade would have been an improvement. The cantata, which is excellently adapted for such concerts, was well received by a large audience. The second part was miscellaneous. The vocal honours of the evening were secured by Mr. Bridson, who was in excellent voice.

CITY.—The City Temple Choir gave a concert on the 5th ult. in connection with the Thursday concerts. Several choruses, part songs, and an anthem were given. Solos were sung by Mrs. Parker, Miss Ashley, Miss Lily Johnson, Miss Ada Rose, Mrs. Trett, Miss Blaxter, Mr. Alexander Tucker, Mr. Doble, Mr. J. T. Taylor, Mr. James Thomas, Mr. Friend. Miss Tidy and Miss Eaton took part in a duet.—On Sundays, the 8th and 15th ult., the City Temple Orchestral Band took part in the Service of Praise at the morning service. With the organ they accompanied the hymns.

CLAPTON.—Mr. David Davies, organist of the London Sunday School Choir, has been appointed organist of Clapton Park Congregational Church.

FINSBURY.—On the 16th ult., a concert in aid of the funds of Finsbury Chapel, was given here by the London Sunday School Orchestral Band, under the conductorship of Mr. David Davies. The orchestral pieces rendered comprised the "Wedding March" (Mendelssohn), Largo (Handel), Overture, "Poet and Peasant" (Suppé), Gavotte and Minuet, for strings (C. Lee Williams), and the March, "Hoch Habsburg" (Kral). The soloists were Miss K. M. Cove (Silver Medallist L.A.M.), Mr. William G. Briggs, and Mr. A. S. Lupton. In addition Miss Lilian Watson rendered two violoncello solos, and Mr. Sidney E. Roome a violin solo, which was much applauded. A large and appreciative audience was present.

FINSBURY PARK.—On Friday, the 20th ult., a carol concert was given in the Finsbury Park Hall, under the conductorship of Mr. A. J. Hawkins. Mr. E. R. Mattocks presided at the piano. The carols (new and old) were well sung and much appreciated. Songs were sung by Miss Etta Wright, Miss Florence Watts, Mr. Arthur B. Hodge, and Mr. Sidney Williams.

ISLINGTON.—Dr. A. L. Peace, organist of Glasgow Cathedral, gave an organ recital at Union Chapel, Islington, on Friday, the 13th ult. There was a fairly good attendance, considering the inclement weather. The programme was an excellent one, and Dr. Peace's fine playing and thorough command of the instrument were displayed to advantage, especially in the Sonata, and the florid Duet-Sonata (Weber). The programme included selections from Mendelssohn, Haydn, Hummel, Bach, Weber, Mozart, Haslinger. Miss Alice Gomez was in good voice, and sang with much expression "Ruth" (Gounod) "Weep not, Dear Mother" (Costa), and "There is a green hill" (Gounod). Mr. Fountain Meen ably accompanied. The audience appeared to thoroughly enjoy the good music, and if any applause had been allowed both the artistes would doubtless have received an encore.

KENTISH TOWN.—On Monday evening, the 16th ult., an interesting meeting was held at the British Schools, 158, Kentish Town Road, for the purpose of presenting a testimonial to Mr. Edward Smith, the late organist of the Kentish Town Congregational Church. Circumstances over which he had no control, necessitated Mr. Smith resigning; and it was thought some recognition should be made on his retirement, in consideration of the services he had rendered to the church for the past thirteen years as organist. Accordingly the above meeting was convened, and Mr. Smith invited, when a framed testimonial, handsomely executed by Mr. A. Richards, together with a purse of ten guineas, were presented by the Rev. Mr. Saville, the senior deacon of the church. The evening was occupied in singing, recitations, instrumental music, etc. There were present five deacons of the church, one Sunday School superintendent, the old choirmaster, and about ninety friends, fifty of whom were late or present members of the choir. Several speeches were made, expressing the great friendship that was felt for the late organist. After receiving the testimonial, Mr. Smith spoke, and expressed his unworthiness to receive such a beautiful gift, and only hoped that, notwithstanding their paths would lie in different directions, they would continue friends for ever.—Mr. C. H. Allen Gill, who has attained great distinction at the Royal Academy of Music as a violoncello player, and who has filled the office of organist at St. Paul's Chapel, with great satisfaction to the church and choir, is resigning his position at the close of this year. Mr. Gill was very successful in carrying through several concerts, at which such

works as Dr. Arme's "Hezekiah," and Gaul's "Holy City" and "Ruth" were performed in the church by a choir of sixty voices and an orchestra of twenty performers. Mr. Gill, who comes from a musical family, is no less distinguished for his geniality and patience than for his musical knowledge and ability. He is to be succeeded by Mr. Harry Codner, a young organist of great promise.

STREATHAM.—"The Captives of Babylon" was rendered by a choir and orchestra of fifty performers, on Wednesday evening, 4th ult., at the Baptist Chapel, Lewin Road, in aid of the new school building fund. The orchestra was adequately equipped with instrumentalists, who ably performed their parts. The chorus evinced its careful training from the outset. Among the principal choruses was that commencing "The thunders of the Lord," and describing the fall of the doomed city. Miss Alice Herring, the soprano soloist, sang with taste "Banished from all they held sacred and dear," and "Presumptuous monarch." Among other numbers, "A voice was heard in Ramah" was beautifully given by Miss Emily Bull. These ladies were heard to advantage in their duets. The recitatives and the air, "Render your hearts," exhibited the fine tenor voice of Mr. Henry G. Bates; and Mr. J. H. Jenkin (bass) sang the solo, "Sanctify yourselves," and the recitative arioso, "Wherefore the wrath of the Lord," with suitable expression. Worthy of special mention were the fifteenth number, "By the waters of Babylon," containing chorus, solo, and duet; and the number dealing with the destruction of Belshazzar's palace. The concluding piece, chorus and duet for soprano and tenor, "Break forth into joy," was warmly applauded and repeated. The conductor was Mr. R. C. Tresidder, and the success of the oratorio was due in no small measure to his able leadership in that capacity.—A carol concert was given in the Stanhope Road Hall in connection with the Wesleyan Mutual Improvement Society, on the 19th ult., under the direction of Mr. Walter G. Stott, the organist of the church. The programme was a very attractive one, and included both modern and ancient carols.

TWICKENHAM.—A concert was given in the schools adjoining the Congregational Church, on Wednesday evening, the 18th ult., but, unfortunately (owing, in all probability, to the bad weather and the proximity of Christmas), the audience, though appreciative, was far more scanty than it should have been. The whole programme was attractive, but for special mention we would select the sonata for violin and piano (Greig), played by Mr. Henry R. Starr and Mr. J. L. Phillips; German's "Bolero," by Mr. Starr (encored); "Roberto O tu che adoro," Miss Effie Clements; "Among the Passion Flowers" and "The Old Sundial," both sung by Miss Annie Wilson (the latter enthusiastically encored), and followed by "The Gift;" the duet, "Excelsior," sung by Mr. Pietersen and Mr. Rose (encored); and Miss Florence Jones's piano solos. Miss Munday sang, very prettily, Waley's "Sing on, sing on, ye little birds" (violin obligato by Mr. Starr), but her voice was scarcely strong enough for the room. In "Six o'clock in the Bay," Mr. Duncan was much more successful than in his first song.

PROVINCIAL.

ARBROATH.—A choir union has been formed in connection with Arbroath Free Presbytery, largely owing to the efforts of the Rev. J. M. Scott. On the motion of the Rev. W. A. Gray, the Elgin Presbytery have resolved to form a similar union, and a committee has been appointed to formulate the necessary plans.

BESSES.—The anniversary services of the Congregational Church were held on Sunday, November 24th,

the pulpit being occupied, morning and evening, by the Rev. James McDougall, of Manchester. An address to parents and scholars was given in the afternoon, by the Rev. Thomas Wigley, of Manchester. Collections were made during the day in aid of the church funds. The choir under the direction of Mr. Leaver, the organist and choirmaster, sang the following pieces:—Morning: Introit, "This is the day" (Sir John Goss); anthem, "O praise God" (Thomas Tallis Trimmell); offertory sentences, Nos. 15 and 18 (Edmund Rogers). Evening: Introit, "Lord we pray Thee" (Dr. J. V. Roberts); anthem, "They that go down to the sea" (Thomas Attwood); offertory sentences, Nos. 4 and 5 (T. Mee Pattison).

BLACKBURN.—There is still ample evidence that the Nonconformist Choral Union, as a musical body, is making distinct progress. Their second attempt at "The Messiah," on December 10th, was a worthy successor to the first. There is still room for greater individuality of touch in the chorus, a little more discrimination as to the *pianissimo* and *fortissimo* passages, and tune could be better. On the other hand time was well borne in mind. The principals were:—Miss Marjorie Eaton, soprano; Miss Alice Bertenshaw, contralto; Mr. G. Butterworth, tenor; and Mr. Charles Manners, bass. The band and chorus numbered 150. Mr. Butterworth gave the well-known recit, "Comfort ye," with taste and feeling, and throughout he did well, although a little lacking in power. Mr. Charles Manners, who has a fine bass voice, and is rapidly making a wide reputation, is hardly at home in oratorio. In the earlier solos he did not seem to grasp the sympathy of the work, and his vocalization was rather rough. Later on he improved greatly. "Why do the nations?" was sung with declamatory power, and an encore was called forth by his rendition of "Behold! I tell you a mystery." Miss Marjorie Eaton, who is new to Blackburn, created a most favourable impression. She possesses a sweet voice of good range. In the difficult Recits and Airs which follow the Pastoral Symphony she sang with great feeling, and afterwards her finished performance of "I know that my Redeemer liveth," was warmly encored. Miss Alice Bertenshaw's rich contralto voice is always heard to advantage in "The Messiah." The chorus did creditably, and Mr. Thornborough conducted with ability. Mr. Green presided very efficiently at the organ. There was a good attendance.

BOURNEMOUTH.—On Monday, the 2nd ult., the first of a series of festivals by the Association of Nonconformist Choirs in Bournemouth, was given in the Punshon Memorial Church, Richmond Hill. Under the conductorship of Mr. B. Greek Stoneman, with Mr. W. H. Hardwick at the organ, a programme of sacred music was performed in the presence of a fairly numerous and very appreciative congregation. The object of the association, as stated in the programme, is the development and improvement of the music of Nonconformist services, the mutual co-operation of choirs, and the holding of festival services. The Rev. J. W. Close conducted the service, and Mr. Wainwright offered prayer. The Rev. W. V. Robinson, during an interval, delivered a short address, in which he first of all spoke of speech as being subordinate to song. He remarked that a service of praise should be an appropriate expression of religious feeling, music being a language of emotion, an outward and "audible" sign of an inward and spiritual grace. Every period of quickened life in the Church was accompanied by an outburst of song, and he referred to the revival under Hezekiah, the reformation in Germany, the reformation in Scotland, to John Knox, the revival in England, and he mentioned the names of Wesley and Whitefield, and Moody and Sankey. So if spiritual life was freshened

or deepened, then there ought to be a corresponding development in Church psalmody. Mr. Robinson concluded by referring to the importance of a true union among the Churches. The programme of music, which was capitally rendered, consisted of an opening voluntary; the hymn "All hail the power!" chorus, "How lovely are the messengers!" ("St. Paul"); anthems, "O Saviour of the world!" (Goss), and "The radiant morn hath passed away" (Woodward); the hymn, "Praise, my soul, the King of heaven;" the anthem "What are these which are arrayed in white robes?" (Stainer); the hymn, "Ten thousand times ten thousand;" and the "Hallelujah Chorus." The next festival will consist of a performance of Spohr's "Last Judgment." A collection was made during the evening in aid of the funds of the Association.—In connection with the Lansdowne Mutual Improvement Society, a lecture on Mendelssohn was given by the president of the society, the Rev. W. V. Robinson, B.A. The chair was taken by Mr. W. Mate, who in his opening remarks referred to the increased interest now taken in musical matters as compared with times past. Musical illustrations were given at intervals by the members of the choir, assisted by several friends, under the conductorship of Mr. J. J. Brazier. The selections were: Part song, "Departure," "To God on high," Sleepers, wake," and "How lovely are the messengers!" from "St. Paul." The solos were: "Slumber and dream," Mrs. Holder; "O rest in the Lord!" ("Elijah") Mrs. Bull; "I praise Thee, O Lord!" ("St. Paul") Mr. Newman; and "Lord God of Abraham" ("Elijah"), Mr. J. K. Hume. Mrs. Haydon played as a pianoforte solo, No. 10 of the "Songs without words." The "War March of the Priests" from "Athalie" was given at the close of the lecture. The instrumental parts were taken by Miss Sworn, Mr. Phillips, and Mr. W. Cooper (violins); Mr. Lockyer (flute), Mrs. Haydon (piano), and Mr. Holder (American organ).

BRIERFIELD.—Farmer's "Mass in B flat" was rendered on a recent Sunday afternoon, in presence of a large congregation, in the Congregational Chapel (the Rev. T. Wesley Brown, pastor). The collection raised was £15.

BRISTOL.—A new organ has been placed in Staple Hill United Methodist Free Church, at a cost of about £300.

BURTON-ON-TRENT.—The Nonconformist Choir Union, which has resulted from the formation of the local choir that took part in the Nonconformist Choir Festival at the Crystal Palace in June last, is now fairly established, over fifty persons, representing eight of the local Nonconformist choirs, having already become members. On November 29th, the members held their first social evening in the Presbyterian Schoolroom, Cross Street, when about fifty members and friends took part in the proceedings, which were of a most enjoyable character. During the evening an excellent supper was served, the tables being presided over by Mrs. Hutchinson, Miss Lizzie Smith, and Miss Mason, assisted by Miss Smith and Miss Edith Mason. Various games were heartily entered into, and songs, etc., were rendered by Mrs. Hutchinson and Messrs. J. Frost, Taylor, F. Slater, and J. Phillips in a manner that elicited loud applause from the audience. On the motion of Mr. Frost (conductor), seconded by Mr. Taylor, a hearty vote of thanks was accorded to the ladies who had presided at the tables and rendered valuable assistance in making the necessary arrangements. Mr. W. G. Hutchinson, the hon. sec., responded on behalf of the ladies, and the proceedings were brought to a close by the company joining hands and singing Auld Lang Syne. Practices are held every Friday evening at a quarter past eight, in the Cross Street Schoolroom, and new members will receive a

cordial welcome. It is hoped that a choir of a hundred voices may be organized to represent Burton at the Crystal Palace Festival in June, 1890.

CAERMARTHEN.—On Thursday, the 5th ult., the annual choral gathering of the Welsh Independent Churches of Caermarthen and its neighbourhood was held in Llammas Street Chapel. The attendance reached about 400, and included the choirs of Llammas Street, Union Street, Priordy (Caermarthen), Abergwili, Elim, Penygraig, Philadelphia, Rama, and Smyrna. The Rev. W. Emlyn Jones, Treforris, conducted, with Master Ernest Isaac at the organ; the presidents for the day being—afternoon, Rev. T. W. Morgans, Philadelphia; evening, Rev. D. Cadvan Jones, Priordy. Mr. John Williams, Old Foundry, Caermarthen, was the secretary. The hymns and tunes rendered were as follows:—St. Joseph, Irefddiol, Trefdeyrn, Goldel, Banbury, Brooklyn, Pen Nebo, St. Crispin, Ardudwy, St. Hilary, Ellacombe, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Aberteifi, Rhuddlan Cuddia dy Ofid, Iesu o Nazareth sy'n myn'd heibio.

CANTERBURY.—On Thursday, the 5th ult., an organ recital was given in Guildhall Street Chapel, by Mr. S. Walker (organist of the Wesleyan Chapel). The programme included pieces by Spohr, Rink, Spinney, Hauptmann, and Costa. A chorus of sixty voices from the Wesleyan, Baptist, and Countess of Huntingdon Chapel choirs took part in Stainer's "Daughter of Jairus," and a selection from "The Messiah." The solos were rendered by Misses Blogg, Houlden, and Sutton, Messrs. Fricker and Dunk. Mr. H. J. Houlden (organist of the Baptist Chapel) conducted. A collection was taken for the organ fund.

GREENOCK.—An organ has been placed in the Free West Church, this being the first instrument introduced in a Free Church in that town.

HEXHAM.—A sacred concert, consisting chiefly of old Methodist tunes was given, November 28th, in the Wesleyan Chapel, by a select choir, with orchestral accompaniment.

LEEDS.—Haydn's "Creation" was given in Rehoboth Chapel, Park Lane, on the 1st ult., by a choir of seventy voices; the principals were Madame F. Shaw (soprano), Mr. Fisher-Heath (tenor), Mr. T. B. Beanland (bass). Organist, Mr. F. V. Hardingham; conductor, Mr. G. M. Hinds.

NEWCASTLE (SOUTH GOSFORTH).—On Tuesday, the 3rd ult., a sacred concert was given, when Dr. Root's cantata, "Faith Triumphant; or, the Healing of Naaman," was performed by the Brunswick choir. Soloists, Misses Poulton, Laethen, and F. A. Ridley, and Messrs. George Lunn and F. C. Humphrey. On Tuesday, the 3rd ult., a concert was given by the choir of Elswick Road Wesleyan Chapel, assisted by choirs from various chapels in the city, and conducted by the organist, Mr. George Dodds, L.Mus., L.C.M. The various choruses and solos were splendidly sung. The organist was Mr. A. Kent.

PRESCOT.—A service of song, entitled "The Life of Samuel," was ably given in the Congregational Church, on the evening of Sunday, the 1st ult., when there was a good congregation. The Rev. A. N. Gilmore (pastor) officiated as reader. The collections were in aid of the Sunday School fund.

RAWTENSTALL.—The large organ in Haslingden Road Chapel was reopened on Saturday, the 7th ult., by Mr. James Lowe, of Manchester. His programme included selections from Mendelssohn, Smart, Sullivan, Guilmand, Salomé, Guiraud, and Meyerbeer. Miss Frederika B. Taylor was the vocalist, and Mr. Frank Cochrane contributed a violin solo.

ST. AUSTELL.—A new organ has recently been placed in the United Methodist Free Chapel, and in aid of the same an organ recital has been given by the organist of Wesleyan Chapel. The Wesleyan choir also sang anthems and solos.

WARLEY (NEAR HALIFAX).—The annual choir services were held at the Congregational Church, on the 1st ult. The Rev. G. A. Wilson, of Sowerby Bridge, preached in the morning, and the anthem, "Gloria in Excelsis" (Prout), and other pieces were tastefully sung by the choir. In the evening a service of song entitled, "David, his Life and Character," was very efficiently rendered by the choir under the direction of Mr. Tom Sutcliffe, organist and choirmaster, the connective readings being given by the Rev. T. E. Whiteley, pastor. Collections were made on behalf of the choir fund.

Correspondence.

We shall be glad to receive communications from any of our readers on questions likely to be of general interest.

"ORGANIST APPOINTMENTS."

To the Editor of THE NONCONFORMIST MUSICAL JOURNAL.

SIR,—I resume the consideration of the above subject with the trite quotation "Circumstances alter cases," and the very original observation that advice cannot be applicable at once to a church in a village, in a country town, in a flourishing provincial city, and in our modern Babylon. And our ideal or standard of excellence must also of course vary. Organ-playing which would pass muster among poor honest farm labourers would probably be not quite "up" to the requirements of City men and their families in a suburban Nonconformist Cathedral. And so, also, with respect to salary; while a nominal stipend may satisfy all demands in a small place, the payment for services rendered in larger places and more important appointments ought to bear some reasonable relation to the position of the congregation, and to the skill, time, and labour expended. Adequately-paid organists are not very numerous—probably the average payment does not much exceed fifteen-pence per hour, counting services, rehearsals, and necessary practice; a rate of remuneration hardly calculated to tempt rising talent either to join, or to remain in, the ranks of Dissent, looking at the matter musically. And considering that really good positions for competent musicians are scarce among Noncons—that an entirely different world, so to speak, is open to genius, and to its first cousin, hard work, in the Establishment—and that too many of our people have as yet but little appreciation of talent and good work at the organ—it is not much to be wondered at that firstclass organ-playing in Dissenting places of worship is not so general as one could desire.

I do not think it a matter for regret that in many cases the "selection" of an organist is rendered unnecessary.

Where the time-worn Galilean adage respecting native prophets does not hold, and provided that there are not too many rivals having equal claims and similar capacities, rising talent in the congregation itself should be allowed to have a fair chance. Of course, in such cases, common sense must be applied. It is not wise, nor likely to lead to successful working, to place a very young musician, be he friend or stranger, in the position of sole director of the music, no matter what his powers as an organist may be. Choir-training and management demand much tact and some knowledge of men as well as of music; and it would be infinitely better for all concerned that the young organist should devote his

entire attention to his instrument for a while, under the guidance of a man of experience, than that the choir should be placed absolutely under the control of an inexperienced student. First, loyal service—afterwards, rulership. I would not exclude even young professional organists from the scope of this remark, for the simple reason that they have special temptation, if not tendency, to "mount the high horse."

It must be beneficial, and it seems only reasonable, that an organist should rise to a good position by steady gradations, rather than by patronage or success in limited competition. How far would the usual method adopted by churches seeking a minister be suitable or practicable here?

Enquiries are made, names suggested, one or two are heard, a deputation is appointed to investigate work being done—if satisfactory, an offer is made. It goes without saying that the invitation is usually from a larger or more important "cause"—no one would care to ask a good man to take a step *downwards*; and the idea of an organist being selected on his merits, rising (as he gains in ability) in some such way as hinted at, may perhaps be worth considering. I am afraid one large class of organists would not cordially welcome this suggestion—namely, the unemployed.

There is no truer way that I know of judging of a man's powers, than by seeing him in his ordinary sphere of work and when he is under no very special pressure or stimulus. Few good men are at their best or near it, when in the abnormal position of competitors. Brass and nerve, and "go" count for so much, and the finer qualities of musicianship are too often at a discount, then.

Doubtless, where a competent professional umpire is engaged, these points will not be overlooked, and justice will be done; but when, as is often the case, a committee may have to decide, the probabilities of success lie rather against, than in favour of, the best musician. A showy voluntary of Wely's would "fetch" a good many folks who would have no ear for the masterly interweavings in a sonata by Rheinberger; while Batiste in G would be exquisite, selections from Bach or Krebs would be placed in the category of "exercises."

I could tell of a few comical little incidents illustrative of what nervousness will do for organists, by no means bad players, during trial Sundays. One good man couldn't quite decide as to the stops to be used in the second verse, and was so long making up his mind that the minister kindly came to his relief by reading out the hymn, stanza by stanza. A verse more or less played than can be discovered in the hymn is not unusual; while "pumping the swell" is a common feature, and is not altogether objected to by good people who like "variety and life and spirit, you know," in the services.

Into the details of a fairly conducted competition I must not now enter. If the Editor does not assert his prerogative (as editors sometimes do), and inform me in a curt footnote that "this correspondence must now cease," I will say a word or two on this point next month.

GAMBA.

ORCHESTRAL MUSIC IN CHURCHES.

To the Editor of THE NONCONFORMIST MUSICAL JOURNAL.

SIR,—I am much interested in Orchestral Music in churches, and was pleased to see the small paragraph in your December issue *re* "Wesleyan West Central Mission." I am playing at present at a mission which, when I first became connected with it (August, 1888), had a very irregular band of from two to six, and an audience of about one hundred and fifty. It has now

a regular orchestra of fifteen or sixteen members (7 violins, 1 viola, 2 violoncellos, 1 double bass, 1 piccolo, 1 flute, 1 clarinet, 1 cornet, piano, and sometimes an American organ), and a congregation of about seven hundred and fifty.

I should be pleased to see some discussion in the JOURNAL on this subject: "Why should orchestral music be shut out of our churches and left to missions?" Orchestral music is the highest and best form of music, and might easily be combined with our church organs. Why should those who cannot sing, but are players, be prevented from worshipping God through the medium of an instrument? Parts in the music would thus be more clearly defined than on the organ, and each note would become more full of life and meaning. If there was a demand for an orchestra in our services, our hymn tunes would be arranged for the orchestra; each verse would then have a different tone colour, which means a better expression of the words; for instance, what a *grand* effect "The Son of God goes forth to war" (Sullivan) would have were it arranged for choir, organ, and orchestra!

Of course, many hymns would require much simpler treatment. At first there might arise a difficulty in obtaining orchestral arrangements, but as the demand increased, parts would be published for the principal tunes in use, either separately or in books.

The Church, by not admitting the best possible sacred music into the services, has indirectly become responsible for band performances and concerts on Sundays, which, unfortunately, do not always partake of a sacred nature.

It has given me great pleasure to read of the advance of orchestral music in our churches, through your own columns and those of the musical press generally.—I am, sir, your obedient servant,

VIOLONCELLO.

PITCH.

To the Editor of THE NONCONFORMIST MUSICAL JOURNAL.

DEAR SIR,—I have looked in the last three numbers of the JOURNAL in hope of some further correspondence on the interesting and important subject of "Pitch"—organ pitch in particular—opened in September by Mr. Baines.

This subject is of more vital importance to vocalists, perhaps, than organists; for, as a rule, when the music at church goes well, the choir take the credit, and when it goes badly, the organist bears the blame.

However, the organist has considerable anxiety when he essays to work up his choir to perform one of Handel's choruses, which, as Mr. Baines points out, were written at a period when the standard pitch was more than a semitone lower than now.

A friend of mine who has a high-pitched instrument, when he has only the organ accompaniment makes short work of the matter; he keeps his own counsel, plays his organ part a semitone lower, and his choir get the credit for doing their difficult work well. The public do not appreciate fine distinctions in pitch; they know a certain chorus was sung, and take it for granted that it was taken at the pitch indicated in their copy.

On the other hand, I remember that at the performance of Gounod's "Redemption" last season in Regent's Park Chapel, the instrument, being of the old type, Mr. Thomas Pettit had to play the organ part a semitone *higher* than written, to suit the pitch of the orchestra.

It is possible that if the subject is ventilated, and discussed in the musical press, we may, in some degree, retard the inclination to raise the pitch, if not altogether stop it, as stop it must, somewhere.

"Concert pitch" is an elastic term which conveys nothing definite nowadays. The pianoforte dealer

uses it as glibly when he has an old "square" for sale, as when he has a brand new Camden-Towner which gives—as I had an instance the other day—C"=560. No doubt instrument manufacturers are largely to blame in this matter. Makers of cheap pianos, for instance, make them sharper, and sharper with the mistaken notion of giving them brightness. Makers of wood, reed, and brass instruments, act with the same motive, if the truth is known; while organ builders are the best of them content to be creatures of circumstances, trying to serve two masters—using a low pitch where voices only are to be considered, and a higher one where an orchestra is to combine with the organ. Some have boldly altered their pitch. One firm inform me they raised their pitch from C" 518, to 530 in 1885, but the majority drift with tide towards C" 600. Some soprano and tenor vocalists have aided the same evil for, if an instrument be found a shade below *their* standard, they will fidget and complain that the low pitch will "spoil their voices," and so pitch creeps up and up.

The Society of Arts (C" 528), and the Tonic Sol-fa College have done good work in resisting the tendency of the age; organists will do well to support them, and take more interest in the subject.

With regard to the question—"Should a good soloist take the intervals true or tempered?" I venture to think the performer should be governed by circumstances. If there be no accompaniment, or a very soft one, the singer will naturally give the intervals true; but if the melody be played on any instrument, the voice will incline in that direction, whether the intervals of the instrument be true or tempered.

I hope to see the subject referred to again.—I am, dear sir, faithfully yours,

ARTHUR BERRIDGE.

CHURCH CONCERTS AND PARISH RATES.

To the Editor of THE NONCONFORMIST MUSICAL JOURNAL.

SIR,—Some time since I saw an announcement that the Vicar of a parish in Leeds had been summoned by the Local Board for giving an entertainment, at which a charge was made for admission, in his Parish Room, and that the promoters of a service of song in the Baptist Chapel had also been warned that they would be proceeded against in the same way.

I think it would be useful to many of your readers, if some of your correspondents would give their views on the subject.

I note that at an organ recital at a well-known London Congregational Church, the price of admission was publicly announced; and I have more than once given a sacred concert in the Baptist Chapel here at which a charge has been made, although the deacons have always insisted on the tickets being sold in advance, and for the last twenty years, entertainments have been given in the schoolroom, and money has been taken at the doors.

The question seems to be: Is it illegal to make a charge at all? or can a charge be made when the tickets are sold beforehand, and no money is taken at the door?—I am, sir, yours faithfully.

HARRY J. HOULDEN.

Reviews.

History of the Pianoforte. By Edgar Brinsmead. (Simpkin Marshall & Co.)—This is a new edition revised; Part I. on "Sound" now appears for the first time. Lovers of the piano will find this a most readable and instructive book, and they will understand their instrument far better after perusing it.

Larghetto, from Schumann's Symphony in B \flat . Arranged for an organ by W. Lyle Biggs. (The London Music Publishing Co., 54, Great Marlborough Street, W.) Organists will find this a useful piece for recital or Church work.

To Correspondents.

T. O.—No.

F. G.—Thanks. You could not have done better under the circumstances.

W. L. (1) Key of B \flat . (2) Four beats in a bar.

T. J.—The next Festival will be held in June next.

D. H.—Try one of Mendelssohn's sonatas.

A. W.—We can express no opinion without knowing more of the facts of the case.

T. B.—(1) Yes. (2) Novello's. (3) We are not sure. (4) You are right.

The following are thanked for their letters: C. J. (Cardiff), A. F. (Birmingham), D. O. (Harrogate) W. M. (Bury), L. R. (Dulwich), N. E. (Chippenham), S. G. (Kentish Town), T. L. (Prestwich), R. R. (Derby).

Staccato Notes.

FREDERIC CLAY, the well-known composer, died on November 27th. He had been suffering from paralysis for some years.

THE Archbishop of Canterbury has conferred the honorary degree of Musical Doctor upon Mr. E. H. Turpin, Hon. Sec. of the College of Organists.

It is said that Patti's annual income for some years past has not been less than £40,000.

SPOHR'S "Last Judgment" was performed in St. Paul's Cathedral on the 3rd ult., under Dr. Martin's direction. The audience numbered about 7,000.

SIR CHARLES HALLÉ and his Manchester Orchestra gave their second concert in London this season on the 6th ult.

THE Stock Exchange Orchestral Society gave their first concert this season in St. James's Hall on the 10th ult.

MR. MANNS is now conducting the Glasgow orchestral and choral concerts.

A NEW cantata or operetta, entitled "St. John's Eve: an old English Idyll for solo, chorus, and orchestra," was given with much success at the Crystal Palace, on the 14th ult.

DR. A. C. MACKENZIE'S new music to "The Cottar's Saturday Night" was produced in Edinburgh on the 16th ult. under the direction of the composer.

Accidentals.

It was at a public banquet, and one of the great politicians of the victorious party had just ended his speech with the remark, "No, gentlemen; I seek for no office, and desire no place in the cabinet." And then the quartette arose and sang, "Strike! Strike the Lyre!"

A BAPTIST church secured a cornet player, and the minister told the man to play something appropriate while the baptismal service was being performed. Just as the good man led a convert down into the water, the cornet struck up the old tune, "Pull for the Shore."